

Message Text

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R 311745Z AUG 78
FM AMCONSUL WINNIPEG
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2359
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMCONSUL VANCOUVER
AMCONSUL CALGARY
AMCONSUL MONTREAL
AMCONSUL TORONTO
AMCONSUL HALIFAX
AMCONSUL QUEBEC

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 WINNIPEG 406

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, CA
SUBJ: WESTERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE YOUNG PROGRESSIVE
CONSERVATIVE FEDERATION

REF: WINNIPEG A-8

1. SUMMARY: ON AUGUST 26 THE YOUNG PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE
FEDERATION HELD A WESTERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE IN WINNIPEG. ONE
HUNDRED THIRTY MEMBERS ATTENDED. AGENDA ITEMS INCLUDED
DISCUSSIONS ON NATIONAL UNITY AND THE ECONOMY, SET IN THE
CONTEXT OF AN IMPENDING FEDERAL ELECTION AND PROVINCIAL ELECTION
IN SASKATCHEWAN. SINCLAIR STEVENS, ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL SPEAKERS,
PREDICTED THE FEDERAL ELECTION WOULD BE CALLED FOR NOVEMBER 6.
END SUMMARY.

2. FOURTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF YOUNG PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE
FEDERATION (YPCF) FOR THE FOUR WESTERN PROVINCES WAS HELD IN
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WINNIPEG ON AUGUST 26 AND WINNIPEG CONOFF ATTENDED. BECAUSE OF
THE AIR CANADA STRIKE ONLY 130 YPCF MEMBERS WERE ABLE TO GET TO
WINNIPEG TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CONFERENCE. PRINCIPAL SPEAKERS
INCLUDED SINCLAIR STEVENS (TORONTO MP AND PC FINANCE CRITIC),
WARREN JORGENSEN (FORMER MP AND CURRENT MANITOBA MLA AND GOVERNMENT
HOUSE LEADER), AND DICK COLLVER (SASKATCHEWAN MLA AND PC LEADER).

3. MAJOR AGENDA ITEMS INCLUDED DISCUSSIONS ON NATIONAL UNITY AND THE ECONOMY. HOWEVER, MOST DISCUSSION CENTERED ON PROSPECT FOR A FALL FEDERAL ELECTION. STEVENS PREDICTED TRUDEAU WOULD CALL AN ELECTION SHORTLY AFTER LABOR DAY FOR NOVEMBER 6. CITING THE 60 DAY LEAD TIME NEEDED FOR AN ELECTION, STEVENS SAID HE DOUBTED THE ELECTION WOULD BE CALLED FOR OCTOBER 30 BECAUSE 60 LIBERAL MPS BECOME ELIGIBLE FOR A PENSION ON OR AFTER THAT DATE AND THEREFORE AN ELECTION ON THAT DATE COULD BE EMBARRASSING FOR THE LIBERALS. HE ALSO EXCLUDED NOVEMBER 13 BECAUSE OF ONTARIO MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS AND HE BELIEVES IT WILL BE TOO COLD FOR AN ELECTION AFTER NOVEMBER 13. THUS NOVEMBER 6 IS THE LOGICAL CHOICE. ACCORDING TO STEVENS, ANY ONE OF THREE THINGS COULD CAUSE TRUDEAU TO SCRAP PLANS FOR A FALL VOTE COMPLETELY: AN ADVERSE PUBLIC OPINION POLL, A DISAPPOINTING PUBLIC REACTION TO THE NEW ECONOMIC PACKAGE, OR A FALTERING CANADIAN DOLLAR.

4. A GENERAL CONSENSUS DEVELOPED THAT NATIONAL UNITY ISSUE IS A LIBERAL SMOKE SCREEN TO DIVERT ATTENTION FROM ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. ALL OPPOSED TRUDEAU'S PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION WHICH THEY BELIEVE, WOULD TURN CANADA INTO A REPUBLIC. THIS WOULD INEVITABLY LEAD TO MORE CENTRALIZATION OF POWER AND A LOSS OF PERSONAL FREEDOM. JORGENSEN QUIPPED THAT TRUDEAU WANTS TO BE THE FIRST PRESIDENT OF CANADA.

5. THE FRENCH LANGUAGE ISSUE WAS VIEWED AS A REGIONAL ISSUE ONLY AFFECTING QUEBEC, NOT A NATIONAL UNITY ISSUE. JORGENSEN
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SUPPORTED THE CONCEPT OF BILINGUALISM, BUT ONLY IF ACCOMPLISHED VOLUNTARILY THROUGH EDUCATION. COLLVER DISAGREED, STATING BILINGUALISM WOULD NEVER WORK IN SASKATCHEWAN WHERE ALMOST NO ONE SPEAKS FRENCH BUT TWENTY PER CENT SPEAK CREE. COLVER SUPPORTED HIS POSITION WITH A PERSONAL OBSERVATION. NOTING THAT HIS CHILDREN SPEAK FRENCH AND HIS OLDEST DAUGHTER, WHO WAS EDUCATED IN SWITZERLAND, IS A FRENCH TEACHER, COLLVER SAID HIS TRIPS THROUGHOUT EUROPE (INCLUDING BASQUE SPAIN, BRITTANY IN FRANCE, AND BELGIUM) HAVE CONVINCED HIM THAT WHEREVER BILINGUALISM IS AN OFFICIAL POLICY IMPOSED FROM A CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, IT DOES NOT WORK. THEREFORE, HE DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT AN OFFICIALLY BILINGUAL CANADA CAN WORK EITHER. INSTEAD, COLLVER BELIEVES EACH PROVINCE MUST DETERMINE WHAT LANGUAGE IT WILL USE AND IF QUEBEC WISHES TO USE FRENCH, SO BE IT.

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6. COLLVER STATED THAT HE BELIEVES IT IS POSSIBLE FOR THE WESTERN CANADIAN PROVINCES TO NEGOTIATE WITH QUEBEC ON MOST ISSUES. INFAC, HE THINKS THAT EXCEPT FOR LEVESQUE S DESIRE TO ESTABLISH AN INDEPENDENT FOREIGN AND TRADE POLICY FOR QUEBEC (WHICH COLLVER BELIEVES ARE EXCLUSIVELY FEDERAL POWERS), LEVESQUE HAS BEEN ARTICULATING MANY OF THE PROBLEMS WITH FEDERALISM THAT WESTERN CANADIAN PROVINCES HAVE SEEN FOR 25 YEARS.

7. THE MAJOR NATIONAL UNITY ISSUE, ACCORDING TO COLLVER, IS TRUDEAU S USURPTION OF PROVINCIAL AUTHORITY IN EDUCATION, WELFARE, MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS, AND THE MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES. IN THOSE AREAS OF EXCLUSIVE FEDERAL JURISDICTION (FINANCE, FOREIGN AFFAIRS, INTERPROVINCIAL TRADE AND TRANSPORTATION), COLLVER BELIEVES TRUDEAU HAS DONE A VERY POOR JOB. THIS HAS CREATED A CRISIS OF THE SPIRIT IN CANADA WHICH, IN TURN, HAS LED TO THE QUESTION OF NATIONAL UNITY.

8. DURING THE COMING FEDERAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN STEVENS SAID THE TORIES WILL UNVEIL A PLAN FOR SUBSTANTIAL TAX CUTS TO STIMULATE THE
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ECONOMY, INCLUDING BOTH PERSONAL INCOME AND CORPORATION TAXES. HE ALSO SAID THE CAPITAL GAINS TAX SHOULD AT LEAST BE INDEXED TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF INFLATION. UNDER THE PC PROPOSAL, TAX ADVANTAGES WOULD GO TO CORPORATIONS WILLING TO INVEST MORE IN INDUSTRY. STEVENS CRITICIZED THE LIBERAL GOVERNMENT FOR HAVING QUOTE NO GUIDING NATIONAL ENERGY POLICY. UNQUOTE THIS, HE STATED, IS FUNDAMENTAL TO ESTABLISH A FAVORABLE TRADE BALANCE. HE ALSO

CRITICIZED THE QUOTE DETERIORATING TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM UNQUOTE WHICH IS ADVERSELY AFFECTING PRAIRIE GRAIN FARMERS.

9. STEVENS PROMISED A CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT WOULD ELIMINATE, BY ATTRITION, 60,000 CIVIL SERVICE JOBS BY 1981. FINALLY, HE BLAMED THE TRUDEAU GOVERNMENT FOR CANADA S INFLATION RATE, STATING THE MONEY SUPPLY IN 1977 EXPANDED BY 10 PER CENT WHILE REAL GROWTH WAS ONLY 2.8 PER CENT. GOVERNMENT SPENDING, CURRENTLY BETWEEN 40 AND 43 PER CENT OF GNP, IS THE REAL CULPRIT AND MUST BE BROUGHT INTO LINE WITH OTHER WESTERN INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES.

10. DURING THE DISCUSSION ON THE ECONOMY COLLVER LASHED OUT AT THE NDP GOVERNMENT IN SASKATCHEWAN. HE SAID 45 PER CENT OF SASKATCHEWAN RESIDENTS OWE THEIR JOBS, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, TO THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT. HE CLAIMED THIS WILL INCREASE TO 75 PER CENT BY 1981 UNLESS THE NDP IS DEFEATED IN THE NEXT ELECTION. COLLVER BLAMED THE CURRENT CONSTRUCTION STRIKE IN THE PROVINCE ON THE NDP GOVERNMENT. STATING THAT LABOR-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS HAVE BEEN UNHEALTHY FOR SEVERAL YEARS BECAUSE OF UNWARRENED PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION, HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT MUST BE AN HONEST BROKER AND QUOTE POLITICIANS SHOULD KEEP THEIR COTTON PICKIN FINGERS OUT OF THE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING PROCESS.UNQUOTE HE ALSO CALLED FOR A DECENTRALIZATION OF GOVERNMENT TO BRING THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS CLOSER TO THE AVERAGE CITIZEN, AND A RETURN TO PRIVATE INITIATIVE TO DEVELOP SASKATCHEWAN S NATURAL RESOURCES.

11. COMMENT: THE GENERAL IMPRESSION GAINED FROM LISTENING TO THE UNCLASSIFIED

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SPEAKERS AND TALKING TO SEVERAL YPCF MEMBERS WAS OF A POLITICAL PARTY READY AND EVEN ANXIOUS FOR BOTH A FEDERAL ELECTION AND A PROVINCIAL ELECTION IN SASKATCHEWAN. THE YOUNG PCS WHO WILL BE DOING MUCH OF THE LEG WORK APPEAR UNITED ON POLICY ISSUES AND DEDICATED TO PC VICTORIES THROUGHOUT WESTERN CANADA. THIS WAS THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY CONOFF HAD TO OBSERVE COLLVER IN PUBLIC (SEE REFERENCED AIRGRAM). COLLVER APPEARED TO BE AN EFFECTIVE PUBLIC SPEAKER WHO SHOULD BE ABLE TO GIVE PREMIER BLAKENEY A RUN FOR HIS MONEY DURING THE COMING CAMPAIGN IN SASKATCHEWAN. END COMMENT. CARPENTER

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